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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps
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Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee

Monday, March 1, 2010

Supporting Raised House Bill 5126, An Act Establishing A Chemical Innovations Institute At The University Of Connecticut.

Representative Roy, Senator Meyer, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Environment Connecticut, I am submitting this testimony supporting Raised HB 5126. Environment Connecticut is a statewide, member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization.

The prevalence of toxic chemicals in our environment has direct negative effects on wildlife, water and air quality, and human health. This legislation would create an Institute at UConn that would position our state to create public-private partnerships aimed at reducing the use of toxic chemicals in commerce and industry. Such an institute would provide substantial, benefits to Connecticut's environment, public health and economic competitiveness.

Public-private partnerships to identify and implement less toxic alternatives to chemicals currently used by Connecticut businesses can increase the state's economic competitiveness by reducing costs associated with, among other areas, regulatory compliance in the handling and use of toxic chemicals.

Reducing the use of toxic chemicals by the state's business community would cut toxic pollution released into the state's waterways, air and landscape. This would have lasting benefits for Connecticut's wildlife, public health and quality of life in every community statewide.

The public-private partnership envisioned by this legislation is not without precedent. Massachusetts has had a similar institute operating for 20 years. (The Toxic Use Reduction Institute.) I also wish to point out to the committee that this legislation is drafted to ensure that such an Institute established at UConn would be funded through resources *other than state resources*. Section 1(i) of the bill specifically protects the university from having to divert scarce resources to fund the institute should other private, state or federal funds prove unavailable.

Environment Connecticut is a non-profit, member-supported environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water and open spaces.

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Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in support of Raised HB 5126. On behalf of Environment Connecticut, I urge you to support this legislation protecting our state's water, air and public health.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps
Program Director
Environment Connecticut